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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/500,020	06/23/2004	Yutaka Ashida	AIA-107-PCT	2767
28892	7590	11/15/2005	EXAMINER	
SNIDER & ASSOCIATES P. O. BOX 27613 WASHINGTON, DC 20038-7613			CLARK, AMY LYNN	
		ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER	
		1655		

DATE MAILED: 11/15/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/500,020	ASHIDA ET AL.
	Examiner Amy L. Clark	Art Unit 1655

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 1 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 06/23/2004.  
 2a) This action is FINAL.                    2b) This action is non-final.  
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

4) Claim(s) 1-17 is/are pending in the application.  
 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.  
 5) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.  
 6) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are rejected.  
 7) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.  
 8) Claim(s) 1-17 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.  
 10) The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.  
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).  
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).  
 a) All    b) Some \* c) None of:  
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.  
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.  
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)  
 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)  
 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)  
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_.  
 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_.  
 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)  
 6) Other: \_\_\_\_\_.

## DETAILED ACTION

### *Election/Restrictions*

Restriction is required under 35 U.S.C. 121 and 372.

This application contains the following inventions or groups of inventions which are not so linked as to form a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1.

In accordance with 37 CFR 1.499, applicant is required, in reply to this action, to elect a single invention to which the claims must be restricted.

Group I, claims 1-3 and 17, drawn to a screening method for active ingredients which exhibit effects of skin whitening, by inhibiting production and/or release of stem cell factor (hereinafter, SCF).

Group II, claims 4-12, drawn to a skin external preparation which inhibits SCF production and/or release.

Group III, claim 13, drawn to a method for ameliorating pruritus, rough skin, sensitive skin or whitening skin.

Group IV, claims 14-17, drawn to a medicament comprising an ingredient which inhibit SCF expressed inside or on the cell membranes of cornified cells in response to ultraviolet ray stimulation.

The inventions listed as Groups I-IV do not relate to a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1 because, under PCT Rule 13.2, they lack the same or corresponding special technical features for the following reasons: The special technical feature of Group I is a screening method for active ingredients which exhibit effects of skin whitening, by inhibiting production and/or release of stem cell factor (SCF). The special technical feature of Group II is a skin external preparation which inhibits SCF production and/or release, which is not required for Group I. The special technical

feature of Group III is a method for ameliorating pruritus, rough skin, sensitive skin or whitening skin, which is not required for Group I. The special technical feature of Group IV is to a medicament comprising an ingredient which inhibit SCF expressed inside or on the cell membranes of cornified cells in response to ultraviolet ray stimulation, which is not required for Group I. Finally, Claim 14, at least, is anticipated by or obvious over Longley. Longley teaches a method of treating contact dermatitis (please note that contact dermatitis is usually referred to as eczema, but several types of dermatitis exist. Puritus is one of the symptoms of eczema) which comprises administering to the subject an amount of compound inhibiting the stem cell factor signaling pathway. Consequently, the special technical feature which links the claims does not provide a contribution over the prior art, so the invention lacks unity.

Applicant is advised that the reply to this requirement to be complete must include an election of the invention to be examined even though the requirement be traversed (37 CFR 1.143).

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Amy L. Clark whose telephone number is (571) 272-1310. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30am - 5pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Bruce Campell can be reached on (571) 272-0974. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

*Michele C. Flood*  
MICHELE FLOOD  
PRIMARY EXAMINER

Amy L. Clark  
AU 1655

Amy L. Clark  
November 4, 2005